

Volume 09
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Maya Puwath

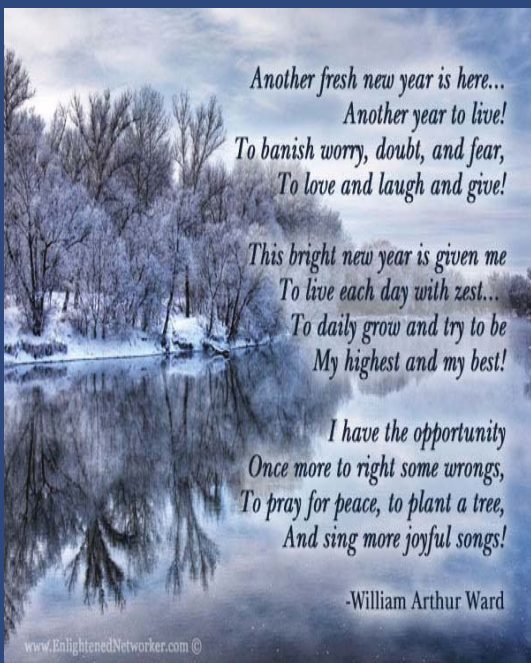
BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF MGCAANA



Let none find fault with others.
Let none see the omissions and
commissions of others.



But let one see one's own acts,
done and undone.
- The Buddha.



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Resources : Google images

Dear Members,

It is a great pleasure to write the editorial for the final issue of Maya Puwath for the year 2013. We are in homes away from homes and MGCAANA is the string that ties us together assuring the bond to our beloved alma mater. Maya Puwath, being the messenger of MGCAANA, brings our members together every other month and I am honored to be a part of it. I believe that you too are delighted to be connected with other Mayans through it.

As we look forward to welcome another new year, this issue starts with a warm new year wish from the president of MGCAANA. The newsletter is decorated with lovely Mayan brides who entered the wedded lives along with those who have gained the highest achievement in their academic careers. Mayans around the world is where you can find the contributions of our fellow Mayans. This issue is filled with adventures and experiences of our members and there is always a place to share the talents of our kids.

The roles we play in the society may vary as daughters, sisters, mothers or wives. But beyond all of them, we are a part of one big family drawn together around Mother Mahamaya. I am glad to present the December issue of Maya Puwath to this precious family and I hope that it will bring you a smile in this holiday season.

Let us get together to bid farewells to memories of 2013 and to welcome the New Year. On behalf of the newsletter committee, I wish you a peaceful and a prosperous 2014!

Hemalika (Karunaratne) Abeyesundara



Greetings From The President



Dear Members,

We have come to the end of an eventful year. Every single accomplishment of ours in 2013 is attributed to all of you, the MGCAANA community. I would like to say a big “thank you” to all of you for your unconditional support throughout the year. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the advisors, the Board of Directors, the Executive committee as well as all the other committee members. MGCAANA owes a special word of thanks to all our families for their support throughout the year.

Over the past year, we moved forward in many projects such as the Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund, which helps economically disadvantaged children at Mahamaya and the Graduate and Undergraduate Scholarship Program, which empowers our own members. Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund has reached a milestone by accumulating about 75% of our goal for the trust fund. We celebrated our 9th Annual General Meeting in Florida, and we are currently planning the 10th AGM at a venue to be announced in January.

2013 was a sad year for all of us because of the passing of our fellow alumnae and great supporter of our association, Mrs. Nanda Leula. Our hearts still grieve the passing of a great lady. May she attain Nibbana!

Most of us reached milestones or had a family member reach important milestones. No matter what happened during the year, I hope we can look at the year gone by and learn from our experiences and be strong as we face a new year.

The years roll by, friends come and go. With the birth of a New Year we all pause to remember those who have gone, to appreciate the good friends who remain and to anticipate with delight the new friendships to be made in the months to come. On behalf of the BOD and the Executive committee, it is my honor and joy to wish you and those dear to you a New Year of health, prosperity and above all, Happiness!

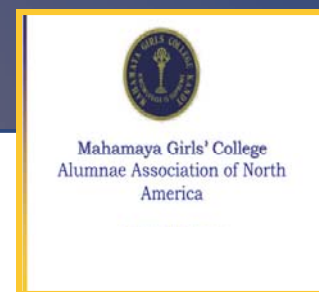
May the Noble Triple Gem bless you and guide you at all times!

Sincerely,

Upeksha Thilakawardana

MGCAANA President 2013/14

Announcements



Dear Undergraduate or Graduate Student:

Finding the best way to finance a college education is a matter of great concern to all students. Mahamaya Girls' College Alumnae Association of North America (MGCAANA) recognizes the importance of education and is proud to offer each alumna the opportunity for the pursuit of her dreams. We are pleased to introduce our new **Undergraduate and Graduate Scholarship Program**. It is our hope that you have accomplished great success, so this program is our way of showing our support to students like you, who consistently strive to do your best.

The MGCAANA Scholarship Program is designed to provide cost of books and material for one *single* semester for Mahamaya Girls' College alumnae pursuing undergraduate or graduate studies in the United States and Canada. Depending on the availability of funds, the scholarship award may range from \$250.00 to \$300.00. The scholarship will be awarded to alumnae demonstrating outstanding academic achievements, leadership ability, participation in extracurricular activities, and a significant level of financial need.

Students should have, at least, 12 semester credits and maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0; a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 will be considered in special circumstances. Applicants who meet the above requirements should send *unofficial* copies of all college transcripts. Incoming high school students are required to include copies of their high school transcript(s) – G.C.E. O/L and A/L certificates (if applicable). A personal statement of no more than 1000 words is another selection criterion. Relatives of the Board of Directors and Officers of MGCAANA *are* eligible to apply, if they qualify otherwise; in such an instance, the particular Director or Officer will be asked *not* to participate in the scholarship selection process.

Please visit our website at <http://www.mahamayaalumna.org> to view and download the scholarship application. Be sure to read the 'Directions and Requirements' carefully before completing the application, and please pay attention to the application periods and deadlines. *All application information is for selection purposes only and will be strictly confidential.* Inquiries about application procedures and the selection process may be directed to the Scholarship Selection Committee at Mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com.

The scholarship application is also available online at :

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LJYYJ5P>.

Thank you very much for your interest in the MGCAANA Undergraduate and Graduate Scholarship Program, and we strongly encourage you to apply, if you meet the requirements. We wish you best of luck in your search for financial assistance and look forward to reading your completed application.

Sincerely yours,

Dharshani Nanayakkara

Chair, MGCAANA Scholarship Selection Committee



**One Day Workshop of SMS
(Soothing Mind & examination Success secrets)
Project of Team Millenniums (A/L 2000 Batch),
Sponsored by SLIIT, Malambe**

The main goal of this project was to guide our own sisters who will be facing the Advanced Level hurdle in near future with information to be more prepared at the examination. The workshop included activities addressing time management, subject management and stress relief.

A video which introduced the members of the team millennium who have successfully finished their doctoral degrees was viewed at the beginning of the workshop. Then Dr. Mrs. Maheshi Dissanayake, Senior Lecturer of Faculty of Engineering, University of Peradeniya, addressed the students sharing her experience throughout her journey towards success.

The workshop was conducted by the Dean and the Senior Lecturers of the Faculty of Management of Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology (SLIIT), Malambe. Six hundred students of Grade 12 participated in the workshop and old girls of A/L 2000 batch of Mahamaya Girls' College organized this project. It was a total cost of SLR 90,613/= and was funded and managed by the following 20 members of the Old Girls' Association , 2000 batch.

Nilanthi Ediriweera	Punya Nanayakkara	C.D. Fernando
Sumudu Thennakoon	Nishaka T. Dissanayake	E.R.M, Sunethra Kumarihami
Lalantha Wajirangani	Maheshi Dissanayake	Ruvini Weeraratne
Kumudukusum R. Ratnasiri	Tharangani Abeysinghe	Thilini D. Dharmawardhana
Amalka Jayasekara	Malika Walgampaya	Nadeesha Dias
Subhani Ranatunga	Ashwinya Meegasthenna	Punya Herath
Sumudu Perera	Imali Jayawardhana	

**Prepared by Kumudukusum Ratnasiri
Translated by Hemalika Karunaratne Abeysundara**



Vidya Scholarship Trust News Update



We just passed the 63% mark!!!

We are very happy and pleased to announce that we passed the 62% (\$ 12,600) mark this month with generous donations from our members, alumnae and well wishers all over the world. Now we are in the second phase of our journey heading towards the goal of \$20,000.

Our progress and what we have achieved so far...

Initially during the years 2009-11, 3 fixed deposits were established at the Bank of Ceylon, Kandy branch, Sri Lanka. Ten scholarships worth of Rs 3000.00 (Rs 1000.00 per term) were awarded in the year 2011 from the interest earned. Two more fixed deposits were added to the trust fund in 2012-13 and the amount of a scholarship was raised up to Rs 6000 (Rs 2000 per term) for the year 2013 for 10 scholarships. We are really excited that a sixth fixed deposit will be added this month before the end of year the 2013.

Please help us in this great cause

Please support our cause. Send your donation to our Treasurer, 2417, NE 20th Street, Renton, WA 98056. Any amount is welcome. MGCAANA is a Non-Profit Organization registered with the US Federal Government. Hence you will get the tax benefits for your donation if you are in USA.

Thank you in advance!

Thank you to the outgoing Board of Trustees of the Vidya Trust Fund (VSTF):

The all Trustees, who served in the Trust in Sri Lanka in the 2012- 2013 and helped giving scholarships to economically disadvantaged students at Mahamaya.

We owe a big thank you to our attorneys Mahesica Giragama (Sri Lanka) and Harshi Waters (USA).

Dear all, without your support, we would not have achieved what we did. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all what you did.

Welcome the New Board of Trustees and Officers of the Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund for the Year 2013/14:

President: Mrs. Indrani Karaluvinne

Vice President: Mrs. Chamila Jayawardhane

Secretary: Mrs. Aloka Ratnayake

Treasurer: Mrs. Priyanka Wansekera Ranthnakumara

Assistant Secretary: Mrs. Uthpala Seneviratne

Trustees & representatives of MGCAANA: Mrs. Geetha Eragoda, Dr. Himashinie Diyabalanage

Welcome aboard all of you! Thank you for accepting our invitations to be part of the VSTF. We are looking forward to work with you to make year 2013-2014 a wonderful year for the VSTF.

Himashinie Diyabalanage

(CO-Chair, Endowment Committee & Trustee representing MGCAANA)



From Left: Mrs. Priyanka Wansekera Ranthnakumara, Mrs. Chamila Jayawardhane, Dr. Himashinie Diyabalanage, Mrs. Indrani Karaluvinne, Principal Mrs. I. Withanachchi, Vice Principal Mrs. Uthpala Seneviratne, Mrs. Aloka Ratnayake.

Cntd...

Vidya Scholarship Trust News Update, cntd.



Annual VSTF scholarship distributing ceremony at the Mahamaya Girls' College Kandy, September 12, 2013

During her recent visit to Sri Lanka, VSTF co-chair Himashinie Diyabalanage was able to attend the VSTF scholarship distribution event at Mahamaya.



Give life to a child's dream.....

Make a donation to help an underprivileged student gain access to the best education you were fortunate to receive :

http://www.mahamayaalumnina.org/VidyaTrustFund/MGCAANA_Vidya_Scholarship_Trust_Fund_Brochure.pdf

Congratulations!

Warm Wishes to Our Beautiful Brides

- **Samanthi Abeyratne and Chamara Abeysekara.**



On 22nd of May, 2013

At Earls' Regency, Kandy

Dressing- Wedding- Thusitha Athugala, Home coming- Bhagya Ekanayake

Floral decorations, Poruwa- By Designer Wedding- Ilanka Kularathne

Photography- Charitha Rajapakshe, Memory Lane

- **Chathurika Herath and Chandana Koswaththe.**

On 16th of September, 2013

at Hotel Suisse, Kandy

Dressing- Salon Punya

Decorations - Flower Sense



Congratulations to 2013 Graduates!

- **Harshani Tennakone:**

Graduated in Spring 2013 with a PhD in Materials Science Engineering from University of Cincinnati. Her research title is Barrier Layer Concepts in Doped Barium Titanate Ceramics.

- **Lakmini Widanapathirana:**

Graduated in Summer 2013 with a PhD in Organic Chemistry from Iowa State University. Her research area is Amphiphilic oligocholate macrocycles: self-assembly, transmembrane nanopore formation, and noncovalent tuning.

- **Sumudu Wijenayake:**

Graduating in Fall 2013 with a Ph.D. in Chemistry, from the University of Texas at Dallas. Her dissertation is Metal organic framework/polymer mixed matrix membranes for gas separations.



33 and Counting - Part 6

By Hemalika Abeysundara



First Few Days of Our longest Road Trip, Washington D.C.

Few days after returning home from Vancouver, we got ready for our 2 week long road trip. As it is going to be a long one, we decided to limit the group for a small party, so it was me, my husband Sachith and our friend Bhagya and his wife Sumedha. Bhagya is also a graduate student in the Texas Tech Mathematics Department and Sumedha was going to start her graduate studies soon at that time at the Agriculture school. As the readers now know how we prepare for road trips, I am not going to write details about the initial planning. We contacted few of our friends who we planned to visit during our trip to confirm the dates.

We left Lubbock on Sunday night, the August 7th and drove the whole night stopping only for small breaks. We passed Oklahoma, Arkansas and Tennessee and came to Virginia on the night of 8th. It was more than 27 hours of drive and we were exhausted at the end of the day. We had a light dinner and had a good sleep because the next day was going to be a busy one with a bunch of places to visit.

Washington D.C., the place we were dying to visit, was our first destination. After parking our car in a parking garage, we started our journey by foot beginning from the White house. The Zero Milestone, the starting point of the distance measurement for U.S. highways was an interesting concept for us. We walked around the area visiting Lincoln memorial, Jefferson memorial, Washington monument and all the war memorials. Washington D.C. is a nicely planned attraction and the Capital building and the Smithsonian Castle added a historic look to the scenery. After visiting all the monuments and the Capital building, we returned to our motel leaving the rest of the attractions to the next day.

Arlington War Cemetery was our first attraction of the next day. We visited the cemeteries of many famous people including the Kennedy family. The most memorable place in the Arlington War Cemetery was the "Tomb of the unknown soldier". It is a tomb dedicated to all the war heroes and a soldier is guarding the tomb every hour. That guard walks in front of the tomb with the same phase regardless of the weather and the ceremony of changing the guards is a 'must watch event' if you visit Washington D.C.

Our next target was to cover as many Smithsonian museums as we could. We started from the Natural History Museum. We were astonished by the huge collection of Sri Lankan gems in the gems and minerals gallery. There were very rare gems and exceedingly expensive gems and jewels from Sri Lanka which made us proud about our motherland. We figured out that one day is not enough to cover all the museums hence we decided to visit Air and Space museum and call off the day. According to the schedule, we had to reach New Jersey at the end of the day so we can start the next day, 11th of August in NYC!



Our Recent Visit to Spain

By Hashini Mohottala



Dear Maya Puwath readers,

I had the opportunity to visit Spain again. As a matter of fact it is for the same reason like last time, attending the international conference for education and innovation. The decision to go there was made in the last minute and as usual my family decided to join making it a more relaxed and a fun filled trip. Sri Lankan passport holders need to apply for Schengen visa well ahead of time as the application is sent to Informatics Central System in France for security purposes. Since we had only two days to get the visa we applied only for Spanish visa and the kind consular general issued the document in 10 minutes. But, if you are a green card holder on Sri Lankan passport be sure to apply at least 15 days ahead for Schengen visa.

The conference was held in Seville this year. It is one of the most beautiful places in Spain. We were able to save a day from Madrid to Seville by taking an earlier domestic flight – by doing that we left luggage behind. Rest of the day we travelled around in Seville getting familiar with the streets and bus routes. By the time we arrived in the hotel, around 8 pm the luggage was waiting there for us to be picked.

Seville is different compared to Madrid yet the signs of a very rich culture and history are well written all over the city and its suburbs. People still don't speak English. We found the best luck with Chinese oriented people this time as well. We carried a Latin American Spanish – English translation booklet along and it helped us a lot. Some words are still different from European Spanish. Making things a lot more easier than last time, we met a conference attendee from Mexico and guess what, she speaks Spanish!

Conference: The conference was great. It is indeed an international conference. There were 650 - 700 participants from 70 countries. It was very colorful - people were in their national (traditional) dresses for the inauguration ceremony. One of the keynote speakers was from Bill and Melinda Gates foundation. He was addressing the audience suggesting video games to educate our children. According to him, the children who are born in this digital era are inseparable from technology. Majority of our kids (including the college kids) are addicted to video games and he was trying to educate the audience on how to use the "addiction" toward education. He sure had a point. But I couldn't totally agree with him as I am an alien to video games – I have got better things to do with my time. The last slide on his presentation had a famous statement by Einstein " ***I fear the day that technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots***". In addition, mainstream presentations were focused on how to adopt mobile phones in education; some suggested using them as clickers and others to use them as devices to access textbooks. One of the most striking lectures was the video discussion on "isolation in the modern world" – a five minutes long clip - walked us through how one child (at the end shown as an adult) got isolated when trying to have a normal life without a mobile device. It was scary!

People in Seville: As always is the case, starting from the very first minute we had the pleasure of meeting very friendly people. When asked for a direction in English (and sign language), they continued to speak in Spanish and went beyond their way to help us, literally taking us all the way to the destination. It is something that we don't see in America but occasionally in Sri Lanka. The city was lively. The temperature was around 66° F and sunny during the whole time of our stay. Going from Connecticut it was a paradise for us with warm weather and all, but for them it was kind of chilly. Still bundling up the little kids, people wandered in the streets of Seville chatting, singing, smoking and sometimes even drinking. People in large groups or small and some in couples, were sitting around the tables, on the stairs or curbs alongside the roads socializing and having fun.

There were large numbers of twins in the city. I was surprised to see so many of them in any given day – beautiful kids – identical twins, wrapped up in blue or pink blankets also were wandering in the streets with their parents.

All went well for us, but I have to note the following as well, one of my friends, an English professor, who participated in the conference was not as lucky as myself. She was pick pocketed in the Madrid airport – the thief has stolen some 350 Euros from her wallet without touching anything else. She was heartbroken, although it didn't happen to me, some of my friends warned me about this prior to the trip. Economy in Spain is not in good shape – they say.

cntd.....



Our Recent Visit to Spain, cntd.

Food Ah.. Amazing, exquisite, mouthwatering and very fine catering too. I am not a coffee drinker. But the aroma of Spanish coffee makes me an addict to their coffee. The taste lifts me off from the ground to a higher energy state.

All complements go to the coffee makers for their effort in making a cup of real nice coffee. The complicated machines they are using sometimes made me think why bother to spend so much time and energy toward a cup of coffee (specially when compared to Dunkin Donuts over here!). But again the thought just vaporizes along with the first sip of the coffee that comes out of the machine.

We tasted Mexican, Spanish and Chinese food in Spain. They were all equally good. They had salt, pepper and all other food ingredients just the right amounts. Most of them except the Chinese food had some long Spanish names and I only have a pictorial memory of them. The conference offered the best wine along with seafood in multiple forms. Ravindu, my five year old, who attended the closing ceremony, had the fun of tasting (eating) melted chocolate, chocolate cream, hard chocolate and various types of cheese combined with chocolate. Ravindu is not a fan of sweets here in the United States. I don't know what happened to the kid I knew.

Sightseeing and the rest: I attended the conference only in the mornings. Ravindu who was in US clock slept through the mornings until 11 am and after lunch we arranged our sight seeing tours. Seville is different from Madrid mostly because of the influence made by Moors in a certain time of their history. The buildings, architecture and the water fountains resembled the Muslim culture. Most of the old buildings had round shaped hemispherical roofing. And some of the art on the walls resembled some definite foreign influence. We visited some tourist attractions in Seville, famous Alcazar, beautiful Plaza de España, amazing Metropol parasol, marvelous Seville Cathedral and few other places. Alcazar is very beautiful; it is a Moorish fortress or a Spanish palace with Moorish origin. Above the large gates at the entrance, a lion with a cross stamping on a spear resembled the Sri Lankan flag (mostly some ancient Sri Lankan regional flags). According to the history, the lion symbol, which never was a part of Spain has come from the Muslim influence. A large park with full of fauna and flora surrounds the fortress. Something I never forget is the presence of large number of peacocks and the most beautiful fragrance of freely grown, yet carefully maintained, Jasmine flowers. My husband Sanjeewa who is a fan of history, dug deep down to find out quite a few interesting facts related to this fortress. Don't forget to visit Alcazar in Seville if you are around the area.

Flamenco dance is very popular in this part of the country. In fact I think it is popular everywhere in Spain. But we got to see more of such dances this time of our visit. The closing ceremony of the conference was full of entertainment, including Flamenco dance. Ravindu enjoyed them so much, he was jumping, clapping and cheering the dancers at all times. It sure was a new experience for all of us.

Getting lost in translation was the only difficult thing in Spain, there were times where cashiers in the restaurants who tried to re-order food instead of charging us for what we ate ! There were times where we went circles in the bus and also times where we got down in the wrong spot and walk the rest. But again, those are the most fun filled memories today. In front of the most famous cathedral in Seville, there were beautiful girls with small rosemary stems in their hands. One walked toward me and placed the rosemary stem on my palm. I said "yo no hablo español" – the only Spanish I knew – " I don't speak Spanish" the young woman immediately switched into English. " No problem, she said, take the rosemary this is for good luck" she held my palm and started reading it. At the end, she made a wish and charged me for the wish she made.

Hashini Mohottala





Venerable Kurunegoda Piyatissa Thero: A Lasting Inspiration

I have known Venerable Kurunegoda Piyatissa Maha Thero since I was very little; in fact, the first place I went after the hospital I was born in, was to the temple (then in Kew Gardens, NY) and met the Venerable Thero even before I went home. Venerable Kurunegoda Piyatissa Thero has always been such a large part and influence in my life since that day.

As a Buddhist, religion plays a large role in my life, from knowing the religious chants, to the teachings of the Buddha, which ultimately crafts me into the person I am. Loku hamduruwo has and is conveying the teachings of the Buddha, not only to me but to the world thus, changing the lives of so many people. When I was 3 years old, Venerable Kurunegoda Piyatissa Thero read my Sinhala "akuru" which is a custom to most Buddhists and thought to be what sets your future in education and to bring luck to the child in his or her education. I feel incredibly lucky to have had mine done by Loku Hamduruwo.

Growing up, Loku Hamduruwo has always encouraged me to keep learning, to try my hardest in everything that I do. He has always been there to give and advise anyone. Venerable Kurunegoda Piyatissa Thero is the most selfless person I know; he has such a kind heart and is so accepting of everyone. People now a days don't come that selfless. They do not put so much of their time, money and effort just to one building. Venerable Kurunegoda Piyatissa Thero has such dedication into this temple... not for the benefit of himself, but for the people; for the people to be able to come into a building and feel peaceful, serene, and calm; for the people that have faith and look to the Buddha's teachings for guidance. He did not have to put his own blood and sweat into helping build this temple with his two bare hands, he really didn't. However, Venerable Kurunegoda Piyatissa Thero did not care that it would cost a lot of money or that there was his own safety risk in physically helping to build the temple; he went ahead and did what he thought was best for the people. It takes someone extremely self-effacing to do all of this and then still not take well deserved credit to himself, but to give the credit to his monks and the people that come to the temple. Venerable Kurunegoda Piyatissa Thero has not only opened the New York Buddhist Vihara, but also opened other temples under the patronage of him. Examples would be the Staten Island Vihara, the South Carolina Vihara, and the Massachusetts Buddhist Temple, these being a few. Venerable Kurunegoda Piyatissa Thero is a highly recognized person in the world, however does not fail to remain the most humble person as well.

Venerable Kurunegoda Piyatissa Thero is extremely kind and welcoming to anyone. He always has the best at heart and is always willing to help in any way he can to better the lives of others. Venerable Kurunegoda Piyatissa Thero has helped me on various occasions whether it was from learning the Dhamma or something for school about Buddhism giving his own experiences and knowledge and allowing me to use it, on some occasions, his kindness has made me want to tear. Venerable Kurunegoda Piyatissa Thero never fails to put a smile on my face. Whenever, I go to temple and I see Loku Hamduruwo I can't help but feel elated to see him.

Venerable Kurunegoda Piyatissa Thero has done so much for me and not only me, but for all of us. I will never be able to repay him for everything he is doing for me in this lifetime but I can try, and hope to make him proud. I am so lucky to have Venerable Kurunegoda Piyatissa Thero as a part of my life. So, thank you Loku Hamduruwo you are forever in my heart and will always be the biggest inspiration I can have. May you live a long and healthy life and be blessed by the Noble Triple Gem.

**By Oneli Ranasinghe,
New York**

Link to the New York Buddhist Vihara: <http://www.newyorkbuddhist.org/>



A Recipe for the Holiday



2 Loaves of White Bread

(With Clear Detailed Instructions for a Beginner)

(Courtesy: Let's Bake Bread by Hannah Lyons Johnson, Takes 4 hours)

You Need

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Large mixing bowl | 2. Long-handled mixing spoon | 3. Measuring cup |
| 4. Measuring spoons | 5. Flour sifter | 6. Clean dish towel |
| 7. Two loaf pans | 8. Large breadboard | 9. Long sharp knife |
| 10. Rolling pin | 11. Pot holders | 12. Wire racks for cooling |
| 13. Pan for scalding milk | | |

What Goes into Bread

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. 1 Package active dry yeast | 2. 1/4 cup very warm water (105F-115F) |
| 3. 2 cups scalded milk | 4. 1/4 cup margarine or butter (1/2 stick) |
| 5. 2 tablespoons honey | 6. 2 teaspoons salt |
| 7. 6 cups sifted unbleached white flour | |

Step 1:

1/4 cup very warm water (but not hot). Sprinkle the yeast into the water, let it sit for 5 minutes. Then stir it with a fork until yeast is dissolved.

Step 2:

Start the dough. Scald the milk, heat it until just before it starts to boil. Scalding the milk kills some enzymes in it which would keep the yeast from doing its work.

Pour the hot milk over the 1/4 cup margarine/butter, the 2 tablespoons honey and 2 teaspoons salt into the large bowl. Stir until the margarine/butter, salt and honey are dissolved. Let the mixture cool until it is lukewarm (a drop of lukewarm liquid won't feel either hot or cold on your wrist).

Step 3:

adding the yeast: Pour the yeast into the mixture and stir it until well blended.

Step 4:

Sift 3 cups of flour into the mixture and beat it well until it is very smooth.

Step 5:

You have dough: Stir 3 more cups of flour into the mixture and stir it well until all the flour is completely blended in. Hard to stir. Now it is a bread dough.

Step 6 - Kneading:

Put the dough on a breadboard sprinkle with flour. Have extra flour hand to sprinkle on the dough so it won't stick to your hands or the board.

To knead, push the dough down and away from you with the heel of your hand, and then fold it over toward you. Push it down and away again and fold it over again. Really lean and press on it.

Turn the dough around on the board as you knead so all sides get pushed and folded. Once in awhile turn the whole piece of dough to its other side. Give the dough extra punches and slaps.

As you knead, sprinkle more flour on the dough a little at a time, until the dough no longer sticks to you or the board.

Keep kneading for about 15 minutes. The dough will become very bouncy. When it feels very smooth and looks almost shiny, you have kneaded enough.

Step 7 - The yeast works alone:

Pat the dough into a round shape. Grease the inside of your large bowl with margarine/butter. Place the dough into the bottom of the bowl and then turn it over so the top side is shiny with margarine/butter from the bowl. This keeps it from drying out.

Yeast won't do its work where it's cold and drafty. A good place to put your dough to rise is in your cozy turned-off oven. Put a pan of hot water on the rack under the dough each time it rises. This will keep the dough nice and warm.

Now cover the bowl lightly with the towel, close the oven door, and leave the dough alone for 1 1/2 hours until the dough doubles its size.

Step 8 - Punching it down:

The yeast needs some fresh air now. Turn the bowl over, let the dough drop onto the board and squeeze the gas out of it for about 2 minutes.

Step 9 - Forming the loaves:

Pat the dough into a round shape. Cut the dough exactly in half with a knife.

On the board, roll each half of the dough into an oblong shape that measures about 3 times wider than your loaf pan and 3 inches longer than your loaf pan. (If your pan is 5 inches wide and 9 inches long, your dough should be about 15 inches wide and 12 inches long, but it does not have to measure exactly.) The bouncy dough need to be rolled hard to flatten it out. Rolling squeezes all the air bubbles out of the dough so your bread won't have big holes inside of it.

Starting at the narrow side, roll the dough up toward you. Be sure to roll as tightly as possible.

Now pinch the end edge of the roll into the roll. Then pinch the ends of the roll together and turn them up over the pinched edge.

Place each roll into a loaf pan that you have greased with margarine/butter. The seams and folded ends should be on the bottoms of the pans. Make the loaves fit the pans evenly by pressing the dough gently with your fingers.

Put the pans in the unheated oven, cover them and let the dough rise again for about 45 minutes or until it is a little higher than the sides of the pans.

Step 10 - Baking:

Preheat the oven to 400 F. (This takes about 10 minutes), after you have put the covered pans in a place free from drafts.

Place the dough in the oven and bake it for about 30 minutes. It may need more or less time to bake depending on the oven.

When done, the bread is a golden brown color all over.

Step 11 - Cooling it:

Let the pans cool a few minutes on a rack. Then turn the pans upside down and shake them gently letting the bread slip softly onto the rack.

Cool the loaves right side up, away from drafts, for at least a half hour before you try to slice them. The cooler the loaf, the easier it is to slice.

This has a crunchy crust. If you want a softer crust, brush them with melted margarine/butter while they are cooling.

Step 12 - Storing the bread:

Wait until the loaves are completely cool. Then put them in a plastic bag and smooth the air out. Tie the ends of the bag tightly. You can put them in the refrigerator or freezer to keep them longer.

Some variations: Try adding 1 cup of raisins to this recipe after your have sifted in the first 3 cups of flour.

A light whole wheat bread can be made by using 3 cups of whole wheat flour and 3 cups of unbleached white flour.

One cup of wheat germ added to the batter will make your bread more nutritious.

Sent by Sujatha Werake

Art & Craft

Crochet Projects



by Sriyani Dissanayake

Nursery Decor



by Hemalika Abeysundara



What is Christmas?

Christmas is the Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ who is believed to be the son of God, the savior of the human kind. The world celebrates the Christmas reminding the birth of the baby Jesus and the sacrifice he made for the entire human race at the end. The true spirit of Christmas brings peace to the entire world as it sends the message of loving our neighbor like ourselves !

"Christmas Comes"

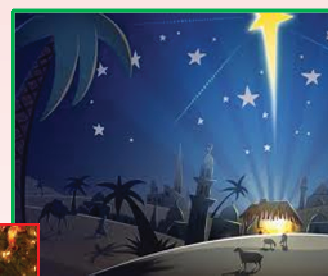
**Christmas comes with children singing,
Christmas comes with sleigh bells ringing,
Christmas comes with frosty nights,
Christmas comes with snowball fights.**

**Christmas comes with Santa Claus,
Christmas comes with snowy floors,
Christmas comes with robins and reindeer,
Christmas comes with a hearty cheer.**

**Christmas comes with gold,
Frankincense and myrrh,
Christmas comes with Jesus' birth,
Christmas comes with angels from afar,**

**Christmas comes with a wondrous star.
Christmas comes now, at last,
Christmas comes, like in the past,
Christmas comes after such a long wait,
Christmas comes and it will be great.**

*by Amy Darnbrook,
Sent by Hashini Mohottala.*



New Year Traditions – Around The World

While wishing our readers a **very happy New Year- 2014** - I like to share some interesting facts about different traditions and rituals passed down from generation to generation, which are believed to bring good fortune and happiness in the year to come.

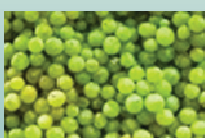
United States: A kiss at the stroke of midnight signifies the purification into the New Year, and making deafening noise is said to drive away evil spirits.



England: The first guest to arrive at their home is believed to hold their good fortune. They believe it should be a man bearing gifts, such as coal for the fire or a loaf of bread for the table. The guest will enter through the front door and exit out the back. Any guest who shows up empty handed or unwanted will not be allowed to enter the home first.



Spain and Peru: These countries have similar traditions, in that they eat 12 grapes to bring good luck in the 12 months ahead. However, in Peru they eat a 13th grape to insure their good luck.



Greece and Norway: Also having similar traditions, in Greece they bake a bread with a coin inside, and if the third slice has the coin, it is said that spring will be early that year. Similarly, Norwegians make rice pudding with one whole almond, and whoever's serving holds the almond is guaranteed wealth that year.



Sicily: Lasagna is served on New Year's Day, because any other noodle served is said to bring bad luck.

Japan: In Japan they decorate their homes for the New Year with pine branches symbolizing longevity, a bamboo stalk symbolizing prosperity, and a plum blossom showing nobility.

China: As most people already know, the Chinese New Year is not on January 1, but they still celebrate old traditions to ring in their new start. Every front door is painted with a fresh coat of red paint, symbolizing good luck and happiness. Also, families prepare feasts without using knives. All knives are put away for 24 hours to keep anyone from cutting themselves, because it is thought to cut the families' good luck for the year.



Sri Lanka: May not be the entire world but we know Sri Lankan New Year is not on January first as well. But we also celebrate the day going along with the rest of the world. There are no traditional activities that we engage in meeting with auspicious times. In general people participate in religious activities and enjoy the day with their close family members. Deep inside we also have this belief in good luck (western influence?) and we do not make visits to other houses in empty handed. On the other hand, do we ever go to a house empty handed any day throughout the year?

Some of the information above are extracted from JFORBES article on "New Year's Traditions and Facts: Do You Know How It's Celebrated Around the World"~~~ Sent by – Hashini Mohottala

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